# Hispanic Heritage Month 2021: Xbox Ambassadors Share Their Stories

Community Fifthpaw Sep 15, 2021

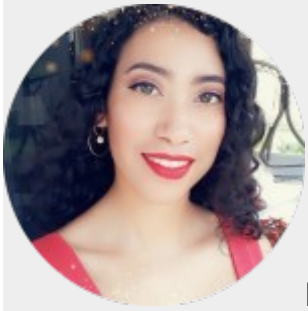
Hey, happy Hispanic Heritage Month! Highlighting and amplifying community voices is core to the Xbox Ambassadors community, so in celebration, we asked those who identify as Hispanic/Latino how games with diverse representation have impacted them and to share their own stories about being a member of the Hispanic/Latino gaming community.

We received hundreds of responses, and with much consideration, selected the following to share.

Here are their stories in their own words:

## ChampGG1

*Panamanian/Puerto Rican*



It’s always a welcoming feeling when I see a Hispanic/Latino character in any game. Whether it’s the main character or a side character, it makes the game feel more relatable in a sense. For

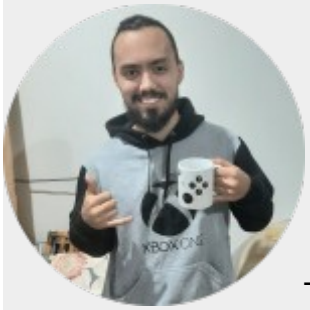
example, in *Shadow of the Tomb Raider*, they start out first in Mexico then travel to Peru. Hearing Spanish being spoken here and there and seeing the culture and life portrayed is just a little reminder of home, or at least my heritage and culture.

It made me enjoy the game just that much more because I understood what they were saying, and I understood the lore behind it all. It was nice to have a bit of my heritage and culture be a big part of a game that I love. It makes the game more immersive to me.

Although some gaming communities can be a bit toxic, for the most part they are welcoming and can teach you a lot about different things. I feel they have really impacted the way I interact with others because it's so awesome how so many people from different places with different cultures and customs can come together and enjoy the same game.

## Bykso

*Mexican and Brazilian*



There are many Latin American characters I like, Blanka and Laura from *Street Fighter*, Bob Wilson and Khushnood Butt from *Fatal Fury*, Carlos Oliveira from *Resident Evil* (because he has the same last name as me), Christie Monteiro along with Eddy Gordo from *Tekken*, Jetstream Sam from *Metal Gear Rising*, Lúcio from *Overwatch*, among many others.

All of them are very impactful in their stories, but I think who I like the most is Eddy Gordo, especially when you finish the *Tekken* game with him, because at the end it shows a small film briefly telling his story with an excellent soundtrack, this scene for me is memorable, it reminds me of good times when I was a kid.

As for gaming communities, I find them immaculate in a very direct way. Today most games are online, whether cooperative or competitive, you are always there interacting with another player who might like the same style of play as you. Communities are extremely important to further strengthen this kind of connection and interaction between us players.

It is because of these communities that we can make new friends that perhaps in some future we can even call brothers. With communities we can

ask for help, answer questions, and help other people. Gaming communities is simply essential.

## DiegoCaldo

*Spanish/Brazilian*

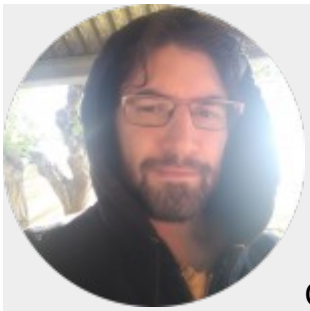
There are many games featuring Hispanic/Latino characters that impacted me. The impact of some games comes from their portrayal of the social gap and violence that we face in Latin America, like *Army of Two* and *Call of Duty*. On the other hand, other games represent the richness and colorfulness of Latin American culture, as in *Viva Pinãta*, *Guacamelee*, etc., which are quite striking for North Americans and Europeans.

However, my favorite story takes place in *Assassins Creed: Black Flag*. Due to the historical aspects of the game, it talks about the discovery of America by the Spanish and the accurate recreation of cities in Cuba. It is quite a history class, even if you are not fond of books.

Gaming communities are extremely important to enhance our experience as gamers, not only for multiplayer purposes, but also as a support during these tough times we are going through. Latin America is still struggling against COVID, and we have all lost someone we know (be it family or friend). In this situation, it is important to have a gaming community standing by your side, even if it’s only virtually, to chat, support each other and make life lighter for a few hours.

## Kaji AF16

*Argentinean (Latin-American and Hispanic heritage)*



Greetings from the Third World! Playing on Xbox is one of the things I love the most. There are not really many prominent Hispanic/Latino characters in our media. Of course, we can always mention some notable examples (Dominic Santiago from *Gears of War*; Rico from *Just Cause*; Javier from T*he Walking Dead Season 3*; Manny Calavera from *Grim Fandango*), but I do believe that our sheer diversity hasn´t been completely explored yet.

We have a long road ahead. Spanish is the second most spoken native language on Earth! You may use Microsoft Flight Simulator, for example, to look at the vastness of the territories which are mainly inhabited by people who identify with their Latino or Hispanic heritage. Imagine how challenging would it be to fully represent those cultures and traditions; we transcend stereotypes, and we can be extremely different from each other, beyond using Spanish as our main language.

I´m 38 years old, so I remember how gaming was before the dawn of widespread Internet. That said, in my humble opinion, online communities have transformed this medium for the better: what was once a potentially solitary hobby is now a fully social activity which goes beyond physical proximity.

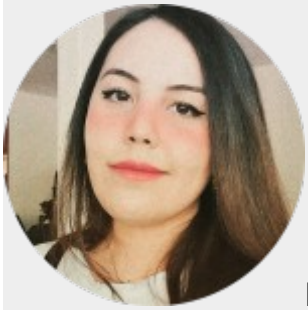
I´ve met a lot of people during my decade of playing on Xbox, and some of them are now among my closest friends. My Halo and Destiny squadron, which was originally formed from people I knew in school, now even includes players from other Spanish-speaking countries, like Peru and Uruguay. I once raced against the very best Latin American Forza pilots in a McLaren-organized Forza 6 tournament. I am part of an unofficial Argentina-based community of Xbox players (Comunidad Xbox en Argentina), which is currently about 20,000 members strong.

We have daily activities, we encourage meetings (not during the pandemic, of course!), and we have even hosted activities at Microsoft´s local offices. Apart from that, I am currently a reviewer and podcast co-host for Colectiva Xbox, an Argentinan-Peruvian media wholly dedicated to Microsoft and Xbox gaming. We have a weekly podcast on Wednesdays, which is one of my favorite activities: we do this out of passion, as there is no monetary incentive for us to invest our time into this.

We merely formed our little community in the South of the World to share our love for Xbox with other Spanish-speaking persons; we receive feedback from people all around Latin America and even from Spain itself. We often refer to the social, cultural and even economic particularities of being a Latin/Hispanic gamer.

## CaroFl98

*Mexican*



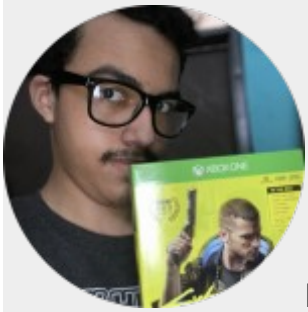
I know that he is basically a villain… but when I saw that scene in *Red Dead Redemption 2* where Javier Escuella started playing guitar and the entire camp started singing "*Cielito Lindo*", it brought back so many memories that I literally wanted to cry. I was very surprised to see Mexican culture represented in one of my favorite games.

I remember one time a while back when I was outside of Mexico in Canada where almost no one knew about Mexican culture. My team and I were there attending an international competition and our team anthem was Cielito Lindo. When we started singing our anthem, the Canadians looked at us with curious faces and suddenly they started to sing along with us!

I felt so proud of being Mexican and representing my country. The Red Dead Redemption 2 scene made me feel the exact same emotions that I did during that one memorable moment in Canada.

## BlackFrankFTM2

*Puerto Rican*



I remember waking up one fateful morning on January 6th, and there I found *Cyberpunk 2077* laying on my living room couch, sealed, brand new. I felt really excited to play it, and opened myself up to the world

that is Night City. Jackie Welles is a huge example of a character that I managed to find comfort in because of my Hispanic heritage. His mannerisms, the way that his family values are so accurately represented amongst us, made me have a deep connection with who he is, and in a way he felt like a person I could have conversations with, despite being a fictional character.

It taught me that as games expand, so do the multiple cultures that are represented in such huge and immersive stories. As someone who is of Hispanic heritage, we feel like we get stereotyped quite a lot, but as more studios become more open and have workers that come from all across the world, it makes me happy to know that we are getting represented more and more.

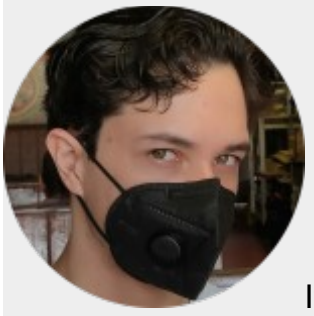
Hispanic developers and gamers alike are getting more representation in this day and age, and in a world where social media is everywhere, it gets easier to promote our games than just from word of mouth. I'm happy to see more and more games shed some light on our culture and spread the good word on who we are.

I remember getting my first Xbox with the 360. It was my first step into online gaming, since Xbox Live was still around by then. At first, I was really shy, and in a way, really scared. I hadn't fully grasped the concept of racism and oppression back then, but I felt really worried that someone would look at me, or talk to me, and immediately cut me off because of who I am.

However, that wasn't the case. As I grew older, I found more amazing and, heck, even understanding people to play with, and I have met friends from all around the world that love me for who I am. I couldn't have been prouder to be Hispanic and have met such incredible and accepting games where we all have one goal in common: to have fun.

## mishirola

*Colombian*



It's such a minor detail, but when I played through the Halo games recently for the first time, the Hispanic and Latino marines really stood out to me. It was inspiring to me, that in this futuristic sci-fi universe,

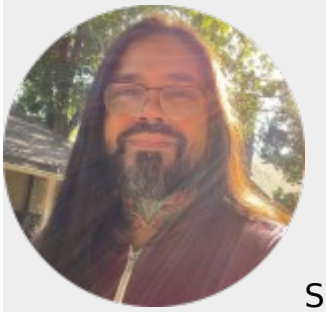
whose protagonist is a cybernetically enhanced super-soldier, I could see myself in these marines.

That I could tell that were hard-working Hispanic and Latino soldiers here, alongside Master Chief, fighting against these hordes of aliens. I could just see myself in them, and even though they were just background characters, NPCs, for a moment I felt like I was with my community, and I felt like we could accomplish anything.

Joining the Xbox Ambassadors and Xbox Playdates communities has allowed me to spend time and play games with such amazing groups of people, in safe, welcoming, and comfortable environments that I haven't found anywhere else.

## suicidereno8888

*I'm half Mexican*



Some of the best gaming memories I have are centred around playing co-op *Gears of War* as Dominic Santiago. His arc was heart-breaking yet beautiful and me having a family myself I could relate. My son's middle name is Marcus, named after Marcus Fenix from the game.

My sons and I had wonderful times playing Gears together. My oldest son and I played *Army of One* as well. Ríos is very strong. I also played *Shadows of the Damned*. The common theme of loyalty and family rings true for me, and I always appreciate Hispanic representation in something I'm passionate about… and I'm definitely passionate about video games, haha!

*Gears of War* changed everything for me with Xbox Live multiplayer. I made lasting friendships spanning the globe. I had a group or clan with the majority of members based in England and we shared many laughs. I was lucky enough to travel to the UK and meet all of them. I'm a singer in a touring rock band called Drowning Pool. We toured there. Without Xbox Live I wouldn't have made those connections!

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Thank you to all our submitters for sharing their stories. Happy Hispanic Heritage Month once again!